1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

commencement of the rains, in April and May, when the rivers begin to rise again and bring the fish into the shallows where they are easily speared among the reeds and weeds. There is very little fishing—by spear in occasional lagoons—after the Nuer have returned to their villages, for these are mainly inland, away from open water, and the streams are too deep and too infested with crocodiles to encourage fishing. Also, the fish are widely distributed by flood water and protected by rank marsh vegetation. Those Nuer whose villages are on the banks of large rivers sometimes fish from dug-out canoes (Plate IX) with long harpoons, but the Nuer possess very few good canoes —and these they have exchanged or stolen from the Anuak—for they have neither the wood nor the skill to make more than crudely burnt-out vessels of palm and sycamore.

Nuer are fine spearsmen but, otherwise, not very ingenious fishermen. Except for occasional fish spitted with amazing rapidity from the bows of canoes by harpoons and spears as they jump or rise to the surface, Nuer never see their prey, but either hurl their spears at random into likely spots amid weeds and reeds or set up grasses and withies to indicate the presence of fish. A myth recounts that once upon a time all fish were visible to the human eye but that God later made them invisible in the water. The chief Nuer weapon is the barbed spear, though the harpoon is considerably used. When fishing in shallows with spears they sometimes strike the water with a ball of twine or the shell of a giant snail attached to a stick (Fig. 10) to attract the fish. Fish are eaten roasted or boiled.

VI

Nuerland is also very rich in game, though Nuer do not exploit this source of food extensively. There are vast herds of tiang and cob; other antelopes are plentiful; and buffalo, elephant, and hippopotami abound. Nuer eat all animals except carnivora, monkeys, some of the smaller rodents, and zebra, and they kill the last for its skin and tail in the south of Lou country, where it roams in the dry season. Lions abound, especially to the west of the Nile, and are a serious menace to the herds, but Nuer only kill them and leopards, the skins of which are worn by chiefs, if they attack cattle in kraals or grazing grounds, as

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XXIV

292
624

A leopard-skin chief

[Face p. 222]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

624
292
142

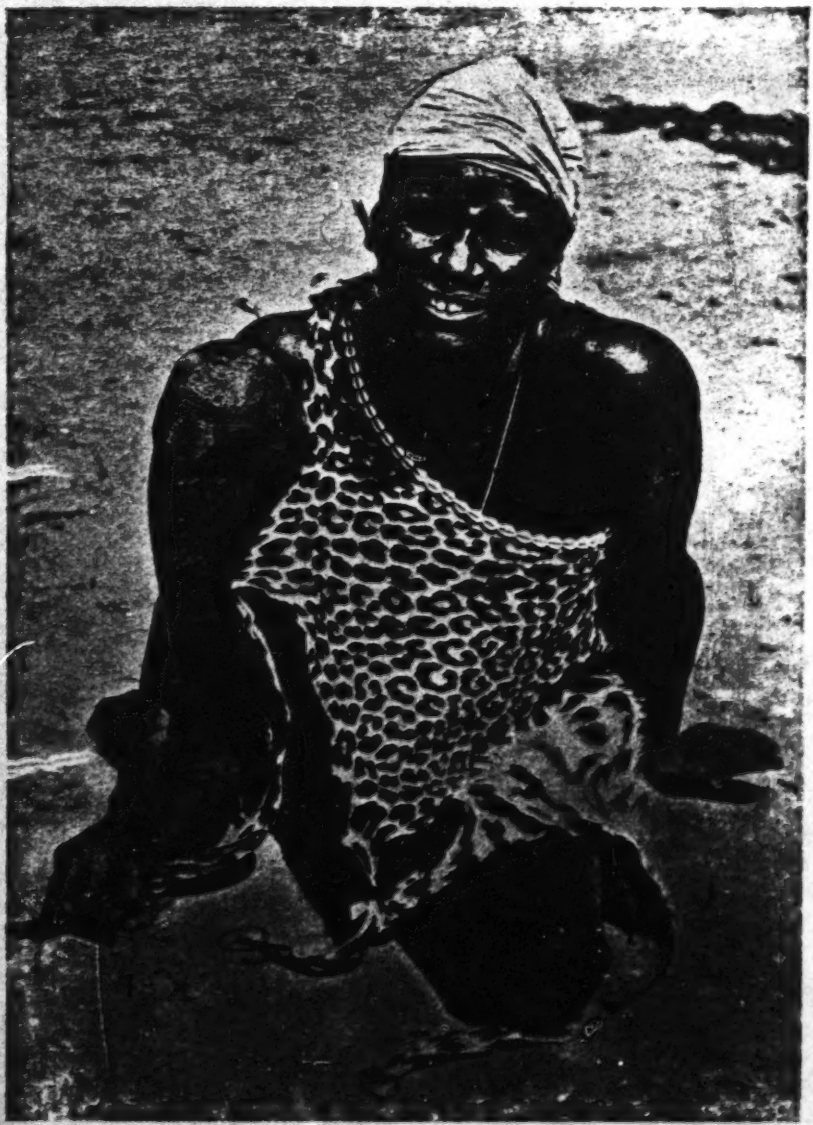

Photo: Dr. J. F. Blom

LEOPARD-SKIN CHIEF

[facing p. 64]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

the spirits of their lineage. The distribution of these cattle is significant. In the first place the girl's father or, if he is dead, her eldest brother or paternal uncle, must receive a guarantee in material form that the prospective bridegroom is in earnest. The ancestral spirits must be called in to bless and assure the future union, and the *yang kwoth* is dedicated to them. Finally, the bride's eldest brother, often a coeval of the bridegroom, must be placated, for it is he who expects to benefit most by her marriage, which will bring in bridewealth which he himself will use for his own marriage. If the girl's family are in agreement, a day is then fixed for the formal betrothal, in the form of a meeting when the cattle of engagement will be paid over. This is known as *cuei*, and the Nuer will say *ce cuei-de cuei*, 'he has engaged himself'.

Cuei: Betrothal

The *cuei* is part of the betrothal negotiations, and amounts to a more public acknowledgement by the bridegroom's family in paying, and by the bride's family in accepting, the cattle which are considered necessary for that purpose. The cattle are driven straight to the homestead of the girl's father, and there remain shut in the cattle-byre while the meeting takes place. The prospective bridegroom and his *gwan twac* are expected to observe rigidly the special restrictions on their movements in the bride's home, the signs of respect and other observances which characterize behaviour towards relatives-in-law. They are not allowed to enter any of the houses, and they must cover their nakedness with a special cat-skin known as *twac thoan*. It is for this reason that the principal assistant of the bridegroom is known as *gwan twac*, 'owner of the skin', and a husband, is usually expected to wear it in the presence of his wife's mother.[1] Beer has been brewed beforehand, and is handed round among the senior guests; dancing takes place, and a bull-calf known as *yang kwen* or *yang lum* (the 'cow of marriage' or 'of courting') is sacrificed and eaten.[2]

The adult males of the two families (with the exception of the bridegroom himself) have therefore drunk together and the kinsmen of the bridegroom have partaken of meat provided by the girl's father. The

gwan nyal (see p. 102, n. 1). It is, on the whole, unusual for a man to pay as many as four head of cattle on betrothal, especially if there is likely to be delay in the actual marriage ceremonies. If any of those cattle died while in the possession of the betrothed girl's family, the prospective bridegroom would be expected to replace them.

[1] The *thoan* or serval cat-skin is to the Nuer a mark of respect shown to a wife's relatives by any of her husband's kin, and in a sense is a symbol of marriage.

[2] The word *yang*, cow, is used here in a figurative sense, for the animal should more correctly be referred to as *ruath* (bull-calf). Nuer say that in older and better times a cow would be sacrificed, though doubtless a barren one. *Yang* means cow, and it might be supposed that a cow would be slaughtered. It may refer to a past custom when cattle were more plentiful, but nowadays the use of these terms in connexion with sacrificial animals is often elastic, and *yang*, which is certainly cow, is often used to refer to cattle of either sex.

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

When a man merely visits a widow for purposes of procreation and is not a resident member of her household, and therefore not foster-father to her children, the cow which he receives on the marriage of each daughter he has begotten by her is called *yang leta*, " cow of the loins." One uses the same expression for the cow paid to the genitor of girls born of wives of women, for he also is not usually a permanent member of the household. However, this expression is slightly vulgar and when the genitor is the mother's partner in a more durable union people prefer to speak of a *yang dieth*, " cow of begetting ", or *yang twac*, " cow of the genet's skin ". It is called *yang twac* because a man who has married a wife to the name of a kinsman wears in marriage ceremonies the skin which the kinsmen would have worn had he been alive, and because men living with women in leviritic marriage and widow-concubinage always partake to some extent of the attitude of respect of husbands towards their wives' relatives —an attitude expressed most noticeably by the wearing of a genet's skin around the loins in the presence of their relatives-in-law. Thus they speak of *Yang ine ci rit ne twac naru*, " The cow with which you twisted to your front the genet's skin of your maternal uncle ", for when you married your maternal uncle a wife you sat in his place in the byre of his wife's father during the bride-wealth discussions, and therefore wore a genet's skin, which is tied first so that it falls over the hip and is then twisted to the front to cover the genitals.

When the genitor is also a kinsman of the pater, having married a wife to his name or having lived with his widow, he receives besides " the cow of begetting " whatever cattle are due to a man standing in his particular relationship to the bride's pater. Thus when a man marries his brother a wife he receives " the cattle of the father's brother ", and when a man marries his maternal uncle a wife he receives " the cow of the paternal aunt ", unless his mother is still alive, for if she is alive she receives it.

As explained above, in certain circumstances an adulterer may ask for a cow in recognition of his physiological paternity. However, this is certainly not always asked for nor, if asked for, granted. If a man begets a female child by a girl whom he is courting and then refuses to marry her, he would not have the effrontery to ask for " a cow of begetting " when his natural daughter is married. He would risk having his skull broken by a club if he were even to visit his natural daughter. Of such a child they say *Caa dieth gooka*, " It was born in the grass ".

When the daughter of an unmarried concubine is married " the cattle of the father " go to her genitor because by payment of a fee he has made himself her pater, though not the husband of her mother. On the other hand " the cattle of the mother " belong to her sons and these may be, or may not be, natural sons of the same man who begat the bride.

This terse statement of the way in which division of bride-wealth indicates the various degrees of paternity will be better understood if Diagram No. V is studied.[1] In Fig. I when C ♀ is married " the cattle of the father " and " the cattle of the mother " go to A ♂. If A ♂ is dead they go to D ♂ and P ♂. In Fig. II when C ♀ is married the cattle of the parents belong legally to D ♂. Z ♂ would receive " the cow of begetting "

[1] [see p. 27. - Analyst]